



## Living Well with Epilepsy

People with epilepsy can benefit from learning skills and techniques that help them manage their disorder, its treatment, and its effects to live full and satisfying lives. Encourage your patients to participate in epilepsy self-management programs.

- Physician support of patient self-management is a key component of effective chronic illness care.
- A patient is much more likely to participate in proven, free or low-cost, convenient programs with a recommendation from a health care professional like you.

**WebEase** (Epilepsy, Awareness, Support, and Education) is an evidence-based online self-management program for adults with epilepsy.

With WebEase, your patients can create a personalized plan and set goals to improve or maintain their self-management skills, including:

- Taking medications as prescribed
- Managing stress
- Getting a good night's sleep

Based on proven behavioral science strategies, the program assesses readiness and motivation to adopt healthy behaviors, and provides stage-appropriate prompts to guide behavior change. Participants then reflect on their progress, which helps reinforce

desired behavior or guide new plans. Participants can also access an epilepsy-related personal diary, videos, links to online resources, and the Epilepsy Foundation eCommunities to connect with others living with epilepsy.

The program was developed by doctors, researchers, and people with epilepsy. People living with epilepsy later tested WebEase and said that it helped them.

For example:  
65% said that WebEase helped them take a more active role in their care.<sup>1</sup>

62% said that WebEase gave them new ideas to manage their stress.<sup>1</sup>

### Benefits to patients:

- No cost
- Focuses on issues of importance to people with epilepsy
- Can be repeated over time to boost skills
- Confidential

To learn more about WebEase go to [www.webease.org](http://www.webease.org). For a demonstration on WebEase go to: <http://web1.sph.emory.edu/ManagingEpilepsyWell/resources/webinars.php>.

## Epilepsy in the United States

- Epilepsy affects about 2.3 million adults<sup>2</sup> and over 470,000 children 0-17 years of age<sup>3</sup> in the United States. Based on these estimates, about 228,000 people in Texas have epilepsy.
- Among adults with active epilepsy with recent seizures, 16.1% reported not currently taking their epilepsy medication, and 65.1% reported having had more than one seizure in the past month.<sup>4</sup>
- Compared with those with no history of epilepsy, adults with active epilepsy reported significantly more mentally unhealthy days (9.3 versus 3.4), physically unhealthy days (10.7 versus 3.6), overall unhealthy days (15.1 versus 6.1), and activity-limitation days (8.4 versus 2.2).<sup>4</sup>
- A survey of adults with epilepsy revealed that at least half reported that they are likely to use an online self-management program.<sup>5</sup>

## Impact of Uncontrolled Seizures

Although there are a large number of antiepileptic drugs available to treat seizures, in a significant number of cases medications alone are not enough to completely stop them. Other treatment options such as surgery or diet control may be considered, but in some cases complete seizure control may still not be achieved.

Uncontrolled seizures can harm your patients in a number of ways. They can increase the risk of injury, depression, anxiety, brain damage, and in rare cases, death. Uncontrolled seizures can also interfere with normal day-to-day activities such as working, going to school, and socializing with friends and family. For some, the complexities of treatment, including medication regimens, dose adjustment, supplemental treatment issues and treatment side-effects can add to the mental and emotional stress of living with epilepsy.

### Epilepsy Self-Management

Epilepsy self-management generally encompasses three broad areas:

1. Treatment management (taking medication as prescribed, keeping clinic appointments, and communicating effectively with health care providers).
2. Seizure management (recognizing and avoiding seizure triggers, keeping track of seizures, and learning the appropriate way and best time to teach others about seizure first-aid).



3. Lifestyle management (getting adequate sleep, reducing stress, and maintaining social support networks).

Adopting and reinforcing self-management behaviors requires an active partnership between your patient with epilepsy, you as the health care provider, and your patient's family and friends.

Your support and recommendation of these valuable programs is vital in helping patients with epilepsy.

### References

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5. Dowell K. Epilepsy Foundation Consumer Needs Assessment 2013. EvalSolutions, Mt. Airy, MD. Retrieved [7/14/2014] from <http://www.eval-solutions.com>.



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